ISLAAM AT A GLANCE

All Praise is due to Allaah, our Creator, Nourisher and Provider. Peace and Blessings be upon all the Ambiyaa (Alaihis-Salaam) and upon Muhammed (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam). Peace and blessings upon his companions who accept and propagated Deen (religion) to the entire world.

THE NEED FOR RELIGION.

Four blind persons were brought to an elephant. They touched it, each one at a different place. The one touching the stomach said that this was a huge round drum. The one who held the trunk said that it was a long stick. The next, who gripped the leg said that it was a pillar and the last one, who felt the ear, said that it was a huge leaf. Each one of them thought that what he had felt was a whole elephant, until someone who could see informed them that what they had felt collectively, was the elephant and that each of them had only one part of the whole.

Similarly, many people who can see, will not be able to give the correct information if they were to be placed in a pitch black room. The blind person's inability to give the proper information is because he lacks the internal light to see. The person who can see suffers from the lack of external light, i.e. darkness. From this, we understand that for correct, valid and total information to be gained, both the internal and the external light is essential. Similarly two beacons are essential for guidance:-

1. **Sahih Aql - intelligence which is guided correctly, and**
2. **Wahi - divinely protected inspiration.**

It should be remembered that intelligence will always be guided by inspiration and not vice versa, because Deen (religion) is based on Wahi (Inspiration) and not on intelligence.

Islaam - What does it mean?

Islaam is derived from the Arabic root "Sal-laa-ma", meaning peace, purity, submission and obedience. In the religious sense, Islaam means submission to the will of Allaah and obedience to His law.

As a religion Islaam stands for complete submission and obedience to Allaah - and that is why it is called `Islaam'.

Another literal meaning of the word Islaam is `peace', and this signifies that one can achieve real peace of body and of mind only through submission and obedience to Allaah. Such a life of obedience brings peace of the heart and establishes real peace in society.

Islaam dates back to the age of Adam and its message has been conveyed to man by Allaah's Prophets and Messengers, including Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammed.

The word Allaah in the Arabic Language means God, or more accurately, The One and Only Eternal God, Creator of the Universe, Lord of all lords, King of kings, Most Compassionate, Most Merciful. The word Allaah is also used as ' God' by Arabic speaking Jews and Christians.

What is "*Tauhid"?*

It is the doctrine of the Unity of God. Tauhid means oneness, and uniqueness. The concept of Tauhid is that God is one and unique; and that there is only one God (Allaah) to be worshipped and obeyed.

What is the significance of `Allaah'?

Allaah is the word used to express a Being who sees and hears All human beings and is without any human needs or weaknesses. The Supreme Being; the Creator of the Universe; the Lord of all the worlds; and the Master of the Day of Judgement.

In the Arabic `Ilah' means god, referring to anything believed to be worthy of worship.
In Islaam `Allaah' is the proper name for God, the ONLY Being worthy of worship, and the word is substantive without any derivative. The equation between `Ilah' and `Allaah' is set out in the Kalima of the Islaamic creed:-

"There is no `Ilah'(deity worthy of worship) but Him, and He is Allaah".

About Muhammed (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam)

Muhammed (blessings and peace be upon him) was born in the year 570 A.C. in the city of Makkah in Arabia. He came from a noble family. He received the first revelation at the age of forty. As soon as he started preaching Islaam, he and his followers were harassed, tortured and persecuted and had to face severe hardships. He was therefore commanded by Allaah to migrate to Madinah, another city in Arabia. During a short span of 23 years, he completed his prophethood and passed away at the age of 63. He led a perfect life and set an example for all human beings and his life was the embodiment of the Qur'aanic teachings.

BELIEF IN MUHAMMED

(Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam)

Belief in Muhammed (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) as the Prophet (Rasul and Nabi) of Allaah is not confined to the mere acceptance or belief in the statement that Muhammed (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) is the Rasul of Allaah. Belief in Muhammed (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) as the Rasul of Allaah means to believe that:

1. **Muhammed (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) was appointed as the Rasul and Nabi by Allaah Ta'ala.**
2. **Wahi (Direct Revelation from Allaah Ta'ala) came to him.**
3. **Muhammed (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) is the final Nabi. There will be no new Nabi after him..**
4. **Muhammed (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) is the noblest and highest of rank in the entire creation of Allaah Ta'ala.**
5. **Muhammed (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam)'s message cancels all previous messages and laws (shariats).**
6. **It is obligatory to act in accordance with the Shariah of only Muhammed (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam).**
7. **Salvation(najaat) in the Hereafter (Aakhirah) is dependent upon the belief in the *Prophethood (Risaalat)* of Muhammed (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam).**
8. **A Muslim has to believe in ALL that Muhammed(Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) taught PROVIDED THAT it has been proven to be authentic.**

THE USOOL (PRINCIPLES) OF DEEN

The entire structure of the deen of Islaam, i.e. of Imaan, is based on THREE fundamental principles which are known as Usool-e-Deen. These are:

TAUHEED - The doctrine of Allaah's Unity.
RISAALAT - The doctrine of believing in a Nabi.

AAKHIRAH - The doctrine of the Hereafter.

These three principles are common to the religion (deen), not only of Al - Islaam, but they were brought by ALL the Ambiya (Alaihis-Salaam). The religion brought by each and every Nabi and Rasul was based on these three principles.

IMAAN IN DETAIL.

Imaan is best described in the following declaration :-

"I believe in Allaah, and His Malaaikah (angles), in His Kitaabs (books), in His Rasul, in the Aakhirat (Day of Judgement) and in the fact that everything, good or bad, is from Allaah, and in life after death."

WHAT IS THE SHARI'AH?

Literally the word `Shari'ah' means the way or road. In technical terms `Shari'ah' stipulates the law of Allaah, providing guidance for the regulation of life in the best interests of man.

Sources of Shari'ah?

The primary source is the Qur'aan, the Book of Allaah. The derivative source is the Sunnah. Other subordinate sources are the Ijma, which is the consensus of opinion among the learned and the pious, and Qiyas or deduction.

What are the main divisions of the Shari'ah?

They are:

(1) **Beliefs and articles of faith - Ittiqaadat ;**
(2) **Practices and exercises of devotion -Ibaadat;**
(3) **Morals and ethics - Aadaab;**

(4) Civil transactions - Mu'aamalaat;
(5) Criminal law and punishments - Uqubaat; and
(6) Social affairs - Ma'aasharaat.

The main sources of the Shari'ah.

We draw upon two major sources in order to acquaint ourselves with the *Shari'ah* of Muhammed (peace be upon him), viz; the Qur'aan and the Hadith. The Qur'aan is divine revelation - each and every word of it is from Allaah. The Hadith is a collection of the instructions issued by,or the memoirs of the Prophet's (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) conduct and behaviour, as preserved by those who were present in his company or those to whom these were handed down by the first witnesses. These were later sifted and collected and compiled in the form of books among which the collections made by Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmizi, Abu Dawood, Nasa'i, Ibn Majah and Maalik are the most authentic.

What is the Qur'aan?

It is the sacred book of the Muslims. It was revealed to the Prophet(Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) of Islaam. The word `Qur'aan' is derived from the work 'qura' meaning 'collected together', and also 'he read or recited'. The sacred book is also called Qur'aan because it is a collection of clear, total, and complete religious teachings and is a book that is to be read over and over again.

The Qur'aan is the last revealed word of Allaah and the basic source of Islaamic teachings and laws. The Qur'aan deals with the basis of creeds, morality, history of humanity, worship, wisdom, the relationship between man and his Creator, and all aspects of human relationships. Comprehensive teachings such as the sound system of social justice, politics, legislation, jurisprudence, and international relations are important contents of the Noble Qur'aan.

Muhammed (peace be upon him), himself was an untutored man who could not read nor write. Yet, it was under his supervision that the Lofty Qur'aan was committed to memory and writing by his followers. This is a miracle in itself, and Allaah's wisdom in making it so was to negate the possibility of people believing that such a comprehensive, moral social and international code, such as is found in the Qur'aan, could be man-made. Had Muhammed(SallAllaahu alayhi wasallam) been a great writer or reader, the people would have attributed Allaah's revelations to him.The fact that he could neither read nor write, negates this whole misbelief.

The original and complete text of the Qur'aan is available to everybody in Arabic, the language in which it was revealed. It has been translated into many languages.

The statistical divisions are:

1. **Harfs or letters - 3,38,606.**
2. **Kalimas or words - 79,934.**
3. **Ayats or verses - 6666.**
4. **Ruku or sections comprising ten or less verses - 640.**
5. **Suras or Chapters - 114.**
6. **Siparahs - The Qur'aan is divided into thirty parts to enable the whole of it to be read in thirty days. Each of such parts is called a Siparah.**

WHAT IS HADITH ?

Literally,the word "Hadith" means news or a communication. In the religious terminology it means the traditions and the sayings and actions of the Blessed Prophet (sallallaahu-alayhi-wasallam). The whole body of traditions is called the `Hadith', and its science is called `Ilm al Hadith'.

***Hadith*, the teachings, sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammed (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam), meticulously reported and collected by his devoted companions, explains and elaborates the Qur'aanic verses.**

The Prophet's Life: A Perfect Model

Prophet Muhammed (Peace be upon him) taught his followers, through word and deed, that their persons and their possessions should always be used according to Allaah's will till the very end of their lives and nothing should lead them astray. True followers of Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) applied these laws and surrendered to Allaah's will in all walks of life.

THE LAWS OF ALLAAH ARE NOT IMPRACTICABLE. THEY DO NOT REQUIRE OF MAN TO DO WHAT IS BEYOND HIS POWER. It is possible for every human being to obey Allaah's commands because what is required is within our reach and power. All we need to do is to implement the Divine Laws in all walks of our life.

Islaam is a Code of Life which governs every aspect of our lives.

1. **The Spiritual Life.**
2. **Intellectual Life.**
3. **Personal Life.**

4. Family Life
5. Social Life.
6. Economical Life.
7. Political Life and
8. International Life.

1. Spiritual Life

Prayer, fasting, charity giving, pilgrimage, love for Allaah and His messenger, love for truth and humanity for the sake of Allaah, hope and trust in Allaah at all times and doing good for the sake of Allaah.

2. Intellectual Life

True knowledge based on clear proofs and indisputable evidence acquired by experience or experiment or both. The Qur'aan points to the rich sources of knowledge in the whole universe.
Islaam demands faith in Allaah on the basis of knowledge and research and leaves all fields of thought wide open for the intellect to penetrate as far as it can reach.

3. Personal Life

Purity and cleanliness, a healthy diet, proper clothing, proper behaviour and good healthy sexual relations within marriage. All these actions should be enjoyed within the prescribed limits which are only for the betterment of all mankind.

4. Family Life

A family is a human social group whose members are bound together by the bond of blood ties, and/or marital relationship and *nothing else* (i.e. adoption, mutual alliance, common law, trial marriage...etc).

Marriage is a religious duty upon all who are capable of meeting its responsibilities. Each member of the family has rights and obligations.

5. Social Life

Man is ordained by Allaah to extend his utmost help and kindness to other family members, relations, servants, neighbours. Even animals have

rights in Islaam. No superiority on account of class, colour, origin or wealth is recognised in Islaam.

6. Economical Life

Earning one's living through decent labour is not only a duty but a great virtue as well.

That which is earned is man's private possession. The individual is responsible for the prosperity of the state and the state is responsible for the security of the individual.

The Islaamic economic system is not based on arithmetical calculation alone but also on morals and principles.

Man comes to this world empty-handed and departs empty-handed. The real owner of ALL things is Allaah alone. Man is simply a trustee.

The only money due to an Islaamic government is two - and - a -half percent of all wealth which is in excess of one's basic needs.

7. Political Life

The sovereignty in the Islaamic State belongs to Allaah. As trustees, the people merely enforce His laws.
The ruler is only an executive chosen by the people to serve them according to Allaah's law. The State is to administer justice and provide security for all citizens.

Rulers and administrators must be chosen from the best qualified citizens. If an administration betrays the trust of Allaah and the people, it has to be replaced.

Non-Muslims can administer their personal life of marriage, divorce and inheritance according to the Islaamic law or according to their own religious teachings.
They pay a different tax called "Jizyah", by which they are entitled to full protection and security by the state including freedom of religion.

8. International Life

Man has a common origin, status and aim. Other people's interests and rights to life, honour and property are respected as long as the rights of

Muslims are intact. Transgression is forbidden.

War is only justified if the security of the state is endangered. During war the destruction of crops, animals and homes, and the killing of women who are not involved in fighting, children and the aged is forbidden.

What are the characteristics of Islaam?

1. **Universality - it is universal in scope;**
2. **Rationalism - it stands for reason;**
3. **Comprehensiveness - it provides a complete code of life;**
4. **Positivism - it takes a positive, not a negative view of life;**
5. **Integration - it stands for integration as opposed to division;**
6. **Dynamism - it stands for progress and development;**
7. **Equality - it stands for equality.**
8. **Social justice - it seeks social justice;**
9. **Communion - it stands for direct communion between man and Allaah without intervention of anyone.**

The ideals of Islaam.

1. **Religious ideal - to establish belief in the unity of Allaah throughout the world;**
2. **Moral ideal - to ensure that everyone becomes an embodiment of moral virtue;**
3. **International ideal - to establish the brotherhood of man;**

4. **Social ideal - to create a pattern of life and social order whereunder the distinction of cast, creed, colour, race, wealth and power find no place;**
5. **Intellectual ideal - to bring about a wholesome synthesis between the material and the spiritual aspects of human personality; and**
7. **Political ideal - to establish a welfare state subject to Islaamic law.**

THE FIVE PILLARS OF Islaam

Every action done with the awareness that it fulfils the will of Allaah is considered an act of worship in Islaam. Specific acts of

worship, termed the 'Pillars 'of Islaam, provide the framework for the spiritual life of a Muslim.
These are given below:-

1. The declaration of faith

"I bear witness that there is no one worthy of worship except (BUT) Allaah and that Muhammed (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) is His servant and messenger" **The Prophethood of Muhammed (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) necessitates Muslims to follow his exemplary life in every aspect.**

2. Prayers

Prayers are prescribed five times a day as a duty towards Allaah. Prayer strengthens and enlivens belief in Allaah and inspires man to higher morality. It purifies the heart and controls temptation, wrong-doing and evil.

3. Fasting

Fasting during the month of Ramadan means the abstention from food, beverages and sex from dawn to sunset and the curbing of evil intentions and desires. It teaches love, sincerity and devotion. It develops patience, unselfishness, social consciousness and the will power to bear hardship.

4. Zakah

Zakah is 2.5% fixed annual contribution collected from wealth and earnings (in excess of basic needs) of the well to do and rich. It is spent on the poor and needy in particular and the welfare of the society in general. The payment of Zakah purifies ones income and wealth and helps to establish economic balance and social justice and awareness in the society.

5. Hajj

Hajj or pilgrimage to the Ka'bah in Makkah once in a lifetime, provided that one has the means to undertake the journey.

May Allaah help us to live with Imaan and may He cause us to die with Imaan.
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